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The Yale Heights Subdivision
Salt Lake City, Utah

by
Suzanne Aldous

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Dr. Peter Goss
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The Yale Heights Subdivision

Recent History of the Land

The history of the development of the Yale Heights subdivision began in 1929 when Fera Decker started acquiring land in the area of Lot 6, Block 27, 5 Acre Plat C, in Salt Lake City. Apparently, Decker was involved in purchasing the land with Morris B. Ashton. However, in 1937, the year the subdivision was begun, it appears that Decker purchased Morris Ashton's portion, but Ashton re-appears throughout the development of the subdivision, buying lots on all three blocks.¹ In addition, a few years after the subdivision was created, Decker and Ashton made negotiations which gave Ashton an "undivided half interest" in Block 3. In September of 1937---after settlement with the Board of Education concerning a future school site, which the subdivision surrounded, and with the Salt Lake City Corporation in connection with creating public streets---finally, the land was ready to be subdivided into lots and building could begin.

The Developers

Although there were a couple of men involved in the development, Fera Decker was predominantly responsible for the buying and selling of the land, and is listed as the proprietor in establishing the restrictions for the subdivision. Decker and his wife, Pearl, resided about a mile west on Yale Avenue itself, in the 1200 block, at the time the land for Yale Heights was developed.² A native of Salt Lake City, he was born to Isaac and Elizabeth Ogden Decker, on November 8, 1868. He married Pearl Gay on February 24, 1891. Beginning his career as a traveling salesman for Z.C.M.I., he eventually became part-owner and salesman for Shupe-Williams Candy Company, and then founded the Decker Jewelry Company. Involved in real

estate on the side, Decker is best known as a pioneer founder of Orem, as he purchased the Duggins property on the Provo Bench, irrigated it, and then sold it as farmland. He developed the Yale Heights subdivision twenty years before his death on September 26, 1957.³ *- Date ?*

Another man, Morris B. Ashton, appears to have been involved in the development of the subdivision. He *may* have been involved with Edward Ashton & Company, because the restrictions and dedications for blocks one and two of Yale Heights were recorded at the request of Edward M. Ashton & Company, September 16, 1937. The only record about him which is available at this point is that he was involved with Fera Decker in buying the original land, in selling it back to him at the time of the subdivision, in purchasing several lots and selling them to potential residents, and also in being granted an undivided half interest in Block Three of the subdivision in the early 1940s. Allan and Marion Mecham recall that "a Mr. Ashton" sold them their lot, and considered him the real estate agent. Edward M. Ashton, founder of the company for whom Morris Ashton might have worked, developed the neighboring subdivisions to the north, east, and south within about four years, and another to the east nine years later. These subdivisions are similar in house type and in picturesque quality, but they differ in that the other Ashton subdivisions have curvilinear streets, but do not have the tall maple trees or large street lights, two very picturesque qualities which Yale Heights does have like much of the neighborhood to the west. Therefore, it is not obvious from the elements of the subdivision alone to infer that the same developer was involved in each.

Another name involved with the subdivision of the property was C.G. Woolley. On September 15, 1937, the Yale Heights subdivision was recorded at his request. It is possible that he surveyed the property for Decker and Ashton, because he is listed as also surveying the

Upper Princeton subdivision in 1928, three blocks west.⁴ Cleveland Groo Woolley was the first traffic engineer for Salt Lake City and was the City Planning Engineer from 1926-1952, at the time of the development of the subdivision, so it is most likely that he was involved in surveying the property and/or in putting in the public streets.⁵

Subdivision Boundaries and Description

The legal description of the boundaries of the subdivision is:

"Lots one through ten, block one; lots one through eleven, block two; lots one through twelve, block three; commencing at the northwest corner of Lot Six Block Twenty-Seven, Five Acre Plat "C," running east 630.33 feet, south 355.5 feet, west 630.33 feet, north 355.5 feet to the place of beginning."⁶

These streets were intended originally to be known as Yale Avenue and Kelsey Avenue. Yale Avenue did become Yale Avenue, but Kelsey Avenue became known as Princeton Avenue instead. Kelsey Avenue has a similar southern coordinate several blocks west of Princeton Avenue, but the street which relates to it in the subdivision immediately west is Princeton Avenue; therefore, the name "Princeton" provided continuity in the area. Yale and Princeton Avenues are separated by property owned by the Board of Education, on which is located Bonneville Elementary School, which was constructed in 1949. The school received an addition in 1962, but the boundaries have remained unaltered. Neither has the subdivision been enlarged, but all of the area closely surrounding it was developed by others within one to ten years.

The streets are on a grid system, but the streets to the east and south, developed by Edward Ashton, are curvilinear. Yale Avenue is on a grid system from State Street with only

a few moderately curvilinear places between 1300 and 1600 East streets. Although it is on a grid system, Yale Heights exhibits several picturesque details. The long course of Yale Avenue terminates at the east end of the subdivision, and although there is a north-south through street there, the fact that Yale is not a direct route east and appears to be a termination limits the noise of traffic. It also provides a more scenic focal point at its termination with other homes and lawns rather than asphalt and traffic. The landscaping is picturesque, including slightly rolling front lawns with a set back line restriction, large granite street lights, and tall Norwegian maple trees. The period revival cottages add a picturesque quality, and though each is unique, provide continuity with quality construction materials mainly of brick.

The residents who moved to Yale Heights wanted to be close to work in the city, but away from the dirt and noise of the commercial areas. Yale Heights was part of a suburb that was near enough to be accessible, but was out of the city and close to the mountains and fresh air. One original resident, Marion Mechem, commented that the coal burning practice in the city created "terribly greasy dirt." Accessibility was important because at the time this subdivision was created, Salt Lake City was still in the fairly early stages of becoming dependent upon the automobile. At the time, most families only had one automobile, so daily destinations needed to be close enough to facilitate sharing one vehicle. Yale Heights was definitely an automobile age ^{subdivision} suburb, and it is likely that all residents had a car. The only other transportation was a bus which ran along 1900 East on the western boundary of the subdivision. A way in which this subdivision differs from those which developed earlier, in the Avenues, for example, is that the largest homes were not built on corner lots, but were toward the center of the street, as it was more desirable to be in a quiet place away from traffic, rather than on the respectable

and prominent corners, as in streetcar days. Generally, the area around Yale Heights meets the criteria of a picturesque suburb because living there involved a journey to work and was motivated by the desire to live in a clean, beautiful area outside the city. Yet, the neighborhood could be self supporting of its daily needs through its local school, churches, and market, and provided a "safe" place to raise a family.

Infrastructure and Development

After the property was subdivided into lots in 1937, the streets, curb and gutter, sewer and water were put in. According to two original residents, Marion Mecham and Hilda Hanson, the trees which line the street and the streetlights were put in within the first two years. (Other amenities came later, including a school, an L.D.S. church, a Protestant church, a shopping area, Foothill Village, a neighborhood park, Laird Park, and a city park, Sunnyside Park.) Several of the homes had stoker furnaces for heating at first, and a coal man used to deliver coal on the street for use in these furnaces. In the early stages of building, the subdivision was surrounded by open fields with views of the mountains. According to one resident, deer used to come into the yards during the winter. Those who settled in Yale Heights had the feeling that, although they were conveniently close, they were on the outskirts of the city and able to escape dirty, crowded city life. Prospective residents were sold lots and employed their own builders to build the home of their choice, within the restrictions which had been laid down by the "proprietors," Fera and Pearl Decker.

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interior*

Restrictive Covenants

The restrictions employed in the Yale Heights subdivision were typical of Decker's day for a picturesque, elite suburb. The purpose of these restrictions was to guarantee to potential residents that the area would be desirable both aesthetically and socially. Concerning aesthetics, every outbuilding, except a greenhouse, needed to correspond in style and architecture to its corresponding house. No one was allowed to reside on the property in a trailer, garage, or basement-only house, except for a few months while the home was under construction. Hilda Hanson remembers that no campers could be stored on the properties. Completed, polished homes constructed of quality materials gives the ambiance of a safe, traditional, permanent (like the materials) neighborhood, making it feel like a "good" place to live.

Unfortunately, not everyone was welcome. In fact, the very fact that it was privileged was exactly what made it attractive and desirable. Permitting only residents who qualify within the restrictions and rules created homogeneity, and less tension among neighbors because ideals differed on a much smaller scale than within the city. Even within the city, racial groups--Italians, Greeks, Armenians, African-Americans, and others--settled in different mini-communities so that they could carry out their way of life with the support and sociability of others who had similar values. It is interesting that rules were employed as a social measure, in a way equating conformity with acceptability; if a resident could meet certain socio-economic and racial standards, and exhibit "appropriate" taste in style and materials, he was welcome in the suburbs. In other words, the homogeneous cultural and socio-economic background of suburban Americans influenced the appearance of the suburbs themselves. The housing stock is primarily influenced by Anglo-American values, with most homes being period revival

cottages in the English Tudor or Colonial Revival styles. The outbuildings had to conform with the dwelling, the dwellings had to conform to a degree with one another, and these conformities illustrated the way in which the residents also had to conform to each other. Exclusions were made primarily on the bases of economics and race. Allowing only private, single-family dwellings, which cost at least \$6,000 to build, inclusive of house and garage only, Decker ensured that the residents would be fairly well off. A further restriction reads: "None of the lots on said plat shall be conveyed, leased, or given to, and no building erected thereon shall be used, owned or occupied by any person not of the white race." Non-whites could occupy the premises when employed as servants there. This restriction is no longer in effect. *O endnote acting the next covenant.*

Housing Stock

The homes on Yale Avenue were built from 1937 through the following decade, with most of the construction taking place in the first four years.⁷ Typical of the time period (1930s and 40s), almost all are period revival cottages with a mixture of English Tudor, Colonial, and Cape Cod styles, with a couple of brick rambler-type homes as well.⁸ About half of the homes have two stories, and half, one story. Most have a living room, dining room, kitchen, and bathroom on the main floor, and perhaps an extra room, or a couple of bedrooms if a one-story house. The two-story homes have three to four bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs.

Construction materials consist mainly of fired brick masonry with a few homes of wood shingle. Most of the homes have concrete foundations, plowed by horses. For the one-story homes, the original approximate size of the main floor is 1100 to 1600 square feet, and for the main and second floors of the two-story homes, the approximate size is 3000 to 4000 square

feet. Almost all of the basements have been finished, and additions have been added to at least five of the twenty homes on Yale Avenue. The facades of the homes are relatively unaltered, maintaining their historic appearance, although a few homes now sport aluminum windows or siding. Overall, the majority of the homes contribute to the historic integrity of the subdivision.

Original Home Owners

As discussed previously, the original residents of the Yale Heights subdivision were a rather homogenous lot. It was more diverse religiously than racially, with at least L.D.S., Protestant, and Jewish families. Economically, the families were mostly middle class or upper middle class, with several white-collar professions represented, such as business men, doctors, airplane pilots, and some who owned their own companies. These characteristics have continued to this day.

Presumably, five homes were constructed within the first year of the development, and were listed in the city directory of 1938. One year later, seven homes were listed, but a great deal of growth occurred from 1939 to 1940 when thirteen homes appeared in the directory. The original residents of Yale Avenue were:

Address	Original Resident (or second resident if within two years)	Year of Construction (as estimated by city directory and county recorder's records)
1903	C. Gordon Lobb - <i>occupation ?</i>	1937
1906	Robert N. Sneddon	1940
1911	L. Grant Bennett	1938
1912	John H. Tomlinson	1940
1919	Elrey B. Jeppesen/C. Fullmer Tebbs (owner)	1937
1920	Lloyd R. Schram/J. Arthur Wood	1939
1927	H. Clement Tebbs	1937
1928	Herbert E. Miles	1940

1935	Lee L. Lovinger, Jr.	1939*
1936	Jack F. Coombs/Mrs. L.G. Holbrook	1939
1943	John W. Lierly	1939
1944	Clair Johnson	1940
1949	Harvey Hansen	1940
1950	J. Gordon Sorenson	1940
1957	Richard L. Jensen/Myron R. Finkelstein	1939
1958	Elrey B. Jeppesen/Frank C. Carman	1940
1965	Hugh S. Beatie	1938
1966	Allan E. Mecham	1938
1970	Charles H. Olsen	1940
1973	G.A. Hanson	1938

*A house was listed at 1933 Yale as "vacant" the first year of the development. Possibly 1935 was originally listed as 1933.

Block 3 of the subdivision, the north side of the Princeton block, developed a few years behind Yale Avenue, with the first house listed in the city directory 1941, and a few more the next year. Both Fera Decker and especially Morris Ashton were involved in the development of Block 3.⁹

Sample House: 1927 Yale Avenue

The home built at 1927 Yale Avenue was one of the first homes on the street. It is located on Lot 7, Block 1, Yale Heights subdivision, on a lot that is sixty-two by one hundred twenty-three-and-a-half feet. Measuring approximately twenty-nine by forty feet, the home has 1162 square feet on the main floor. The full basement was not finished until 1980. The home is a period revival cottage in the English Tudor style, which was a very popular American suburban house style at the time it was built in 1937. Stylistic elements of this type which it contains include a steeply pitched gable and hip roof, fired brick masonry exterior, asymmetrical facade, and arched doorways.

The home's construction is brick on brick with a common bond, consisting of six courses of stretchers alternating with one course of headers. A decorative motif of a three by three basket weave appears around the entire home above the foundation of the house on the second through fourth courses. Other ornamental brick work occurs around the arched front door, and on the southeast corner of the facade. The foundation of the home and the front porch are of concrete, and are situated a few steps above ground level, giving the basement more light. The interior walls are covered in lath and plaster, and remnants of original rose and green wallpaper of a heavy consistency were uncovered in a first floor bedroom. The home has some of the common built-in features of the day, including a china cabinet with a glass door and a protruding mantel with a decorative cornice. Some ornamental features which are thought to be original are glass doorknobs, arched doorways in the front entry way, simple mill work on the doors and baseboards, a glass-paned door between the kitchen and dining room, and thin iron work on the small window of the front door. The initial electrical system on the main floor had thirty-amp screw-in fuses and knob and tube wiring, and it was updated in 1992.

The original owners of 1927 Yale Avenue were Harry Clement ("Clem") and Dott Fullmer Tebbs. ~~They~~ ^{aggravation?} purchased the lot in 1937, three days after the area was officially subdivided, under the name of Dott F. Tebbs. Apparently, the Tebbs' only son, C. Fullmer, and his wife, LaVee, built the home directly to the west (1919) at the same time. However, Fullmer and LaVee lived with their parents for a couple of years while Fullmer rented his home to Elrey B. Jeppesen, a pilot. In 1940, Jeppesen moved to a new home across the street at 1958 Yale, and Fullmer and LaVee moved into 1919. Fullmer, in addition to the insurance agency

reference
to
photo?

he owned with his father, purchased lots and built homes in the area to sell. His wife recalls that he built approximately six homes within a couple of blocks of Yale Avenue, some on Herbert Avenue, the block to the north, and on Princeton Drive, the block to the east. He may have been involved in building one or both of the Tebbs' homes, but his wife could not recall his involvement.

The parents, Clement and Dott, were the long-term residents of the home. Clement was born October 3, 1883, to Daniel F. and Susan Burns Tebbs in Panguitch, Utah. He attended the College of Southern Utah (now Southern Utah University) in Cedar City, and the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. At the Garfield State Bank, he was a cashier for twenty-three years, and also served as mayor of Panguitch. He came to Salt Lake City in 1924 with his wife, Dott Fullmer Tebbs, whom he had married in 1907, and their son. With his son he formed the Tebbs and Tebbs Agency for Occidental Life Insurance Company in 1934, three years before the homes were built. He served two terms as a Utah state senator in the upper house, and was a member of the Monument Park Second Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the time of his death. He died at home (1927 Yale Avenue) on December 16, 1955.¹⁰

The Tebbs family moved to Yale Avenue from 1032 S. 1100 E, where Clem and Dott and their son, Fullmer, and his wife, LaVee also lived together.¹¹ According to two original residents, Hilda Hanson and Marion Mecham, the Tebbs were a very close-knit family, "good, honest people," who were not particularly outgoing in social interaction with their neighbors. Mrs. Tebbs was a tall, thin, fastidious lady, who was very religious, and did the book keeping for her husband's life insurance business. Fullmer and his wife moved in 1961 to one of the homes he built on Princeton Drive, because his father had died and his mother was soon in a

nursing home. According to her obituary, Dott died September 7, 1969 at a Salt Lake City nursing home. A few years after her death, Fullmer sold the home to a man who was involved with Utah Title Abstract Company, Larry Frank Barrett, who rented the home for about eight years before he sold it. The history of the owners and residents is as follows:

Year	Resident (according to the city directory)	Owner (according to the county recorder)
1937-69	H. Clement and Dott F. Tebbs	Dott F. Tebbs
1970-72	Arthur J. Beveridge	(C. Fullmer Tebbs)
1973-74	Vacant	Larry Frank Barrett
1975	Christopher Nielson	"
1976-78	Stephen and Sandy Badger	"
1979	Foreman (?)	"
1981	David and Susan Larsen	David and Susan Larsen
1985	David and Kathleen Miner	David and Kathleen Miner
1992	James and Suzanne Aldous	James and Suzanne Aldous

Table of Neighboring Developments

N

Yalecroft
(Edward Ashton)
1938

W	Upper Yale 3rd Addition (Philip Biesinger) 1928	Yale Heights (Fera Decker & Morris Ashton) 1937	Fairway (Edward Ashton) 1941	E
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Freemount Park
(Edward Ashton)
1940

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End Notes

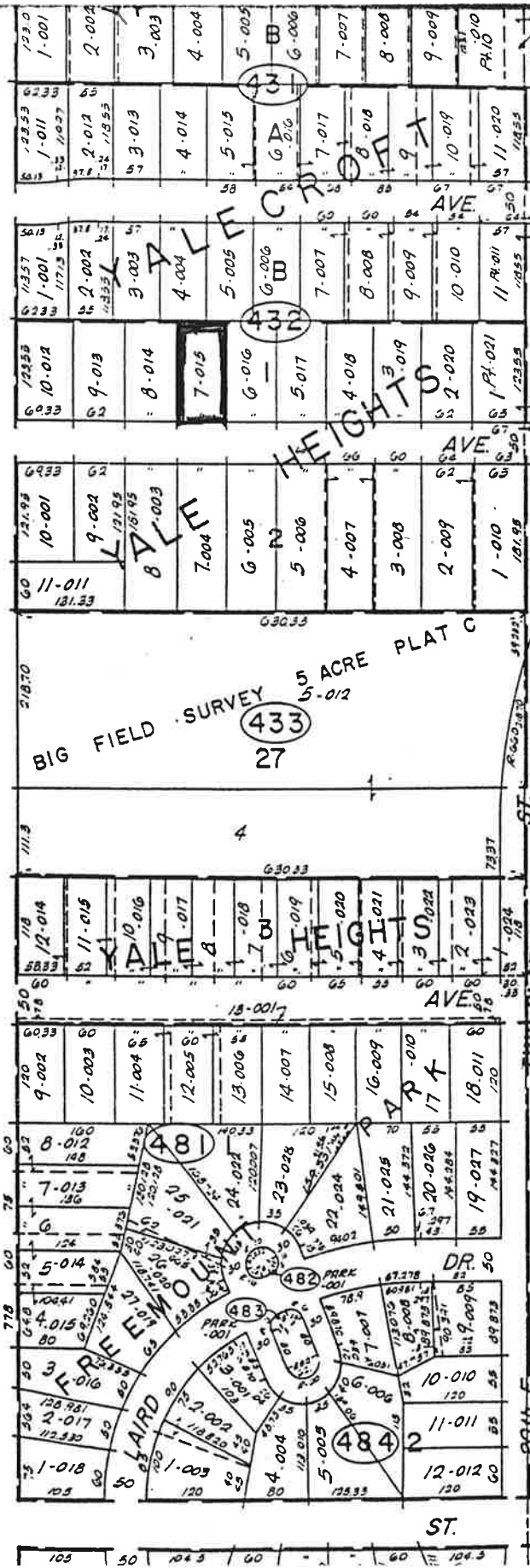
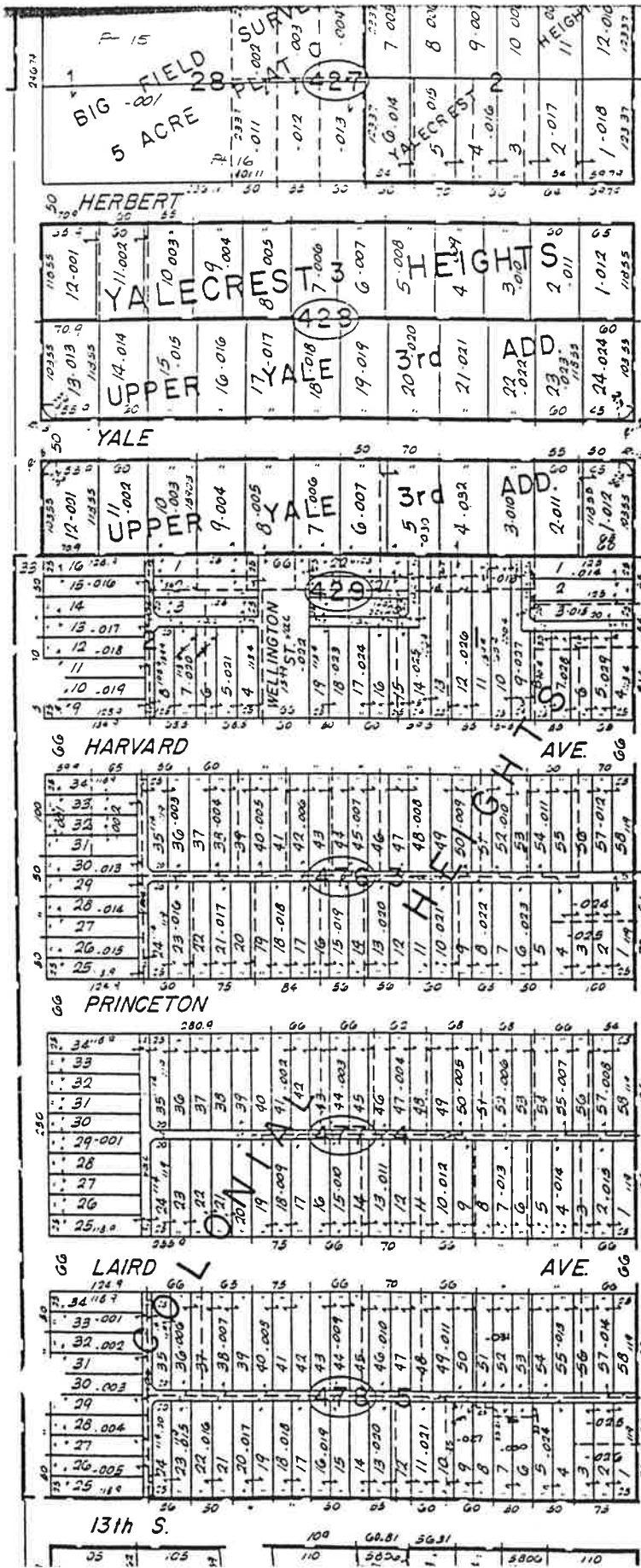
1. Salt Lake County Recorder's office archives, Yale Heights subdivision.
2. Salt Lake City Polk Directory, 1937.
3. Obituary of Fera (Feramorz) Decker, *Deseret News*, September 26, 1957, B-5.
4. Salt Lake County Recorder's office archives, Yale Heights subdivision.
5. Obituary of Cleveland G. Woolley, *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 9, 1955, p. 40.
6. Salt Lake County Recorder's office, "Restrictive and Dedication for Blocks 1 and 2 Yale Heights Subdivision, Salt Lake City, Utah," #818514, Book 196, p. 606.
7. Salt Lake County Recorder's office archives, Yale Heights subdivision; Salt Lake City Polk Directories, 1937-1942.
8. Thomas Carter and Peter Goss, "Period Revival Styles: 1890-1940," *Utah's Historic Architecture* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1988), pp. 145-169.
9. Salt Lake County Recorder's office archives, Yale Heights subdivision.
10. Obituary of H. Clement Tebbs, *Deseret News*, December 17, 1955, B-5.
11. Salt Lake City Polk Directory, 1936-1937.

Bibliography ??

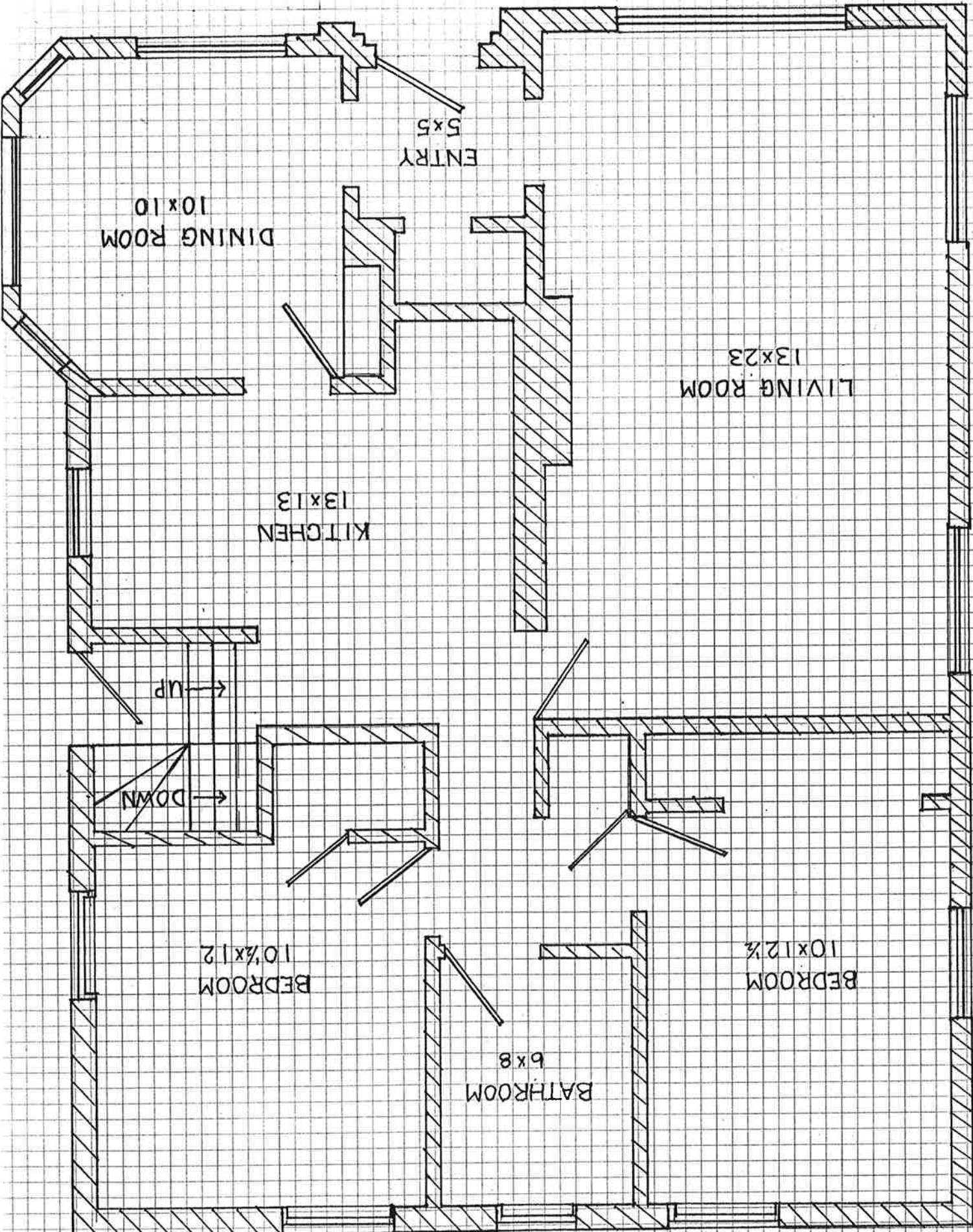
SITE PLAN

Yale Heights

— Sample house



THIS PLAN IS MADE SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSISTING IN LOCATING THE LAND, AND THE COMPANY ASSUMES NO LIABILITY FOR ERRORS OR OMISSIONS.



ENTRY
5x5

DINING ROOM
10x10

LIVING ROOM
13x23

KITCHEN
13x13

UP

DOWN

BEDROOM
10x12 1/2

BATHROOM
6x8

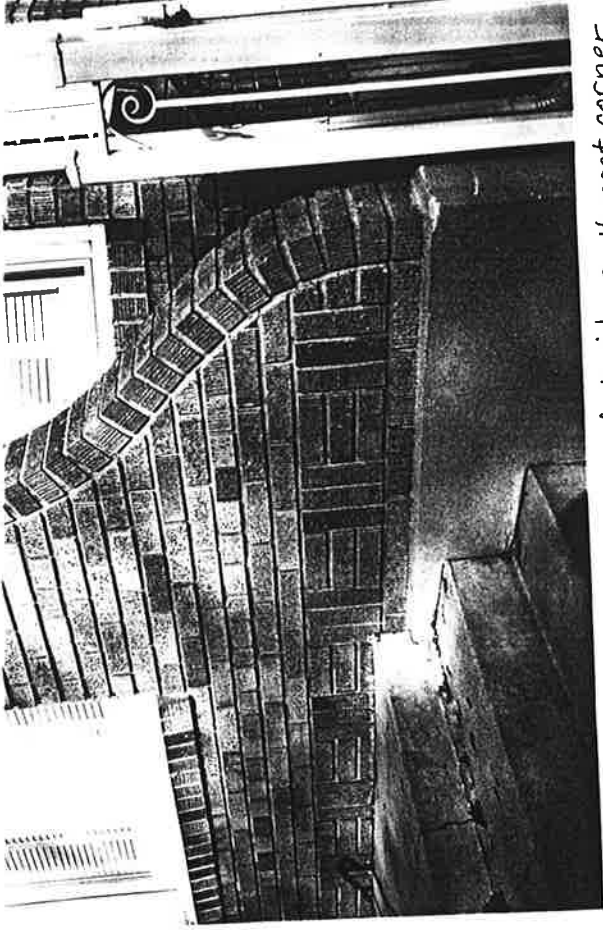
BEDROOM
10x12 1/2



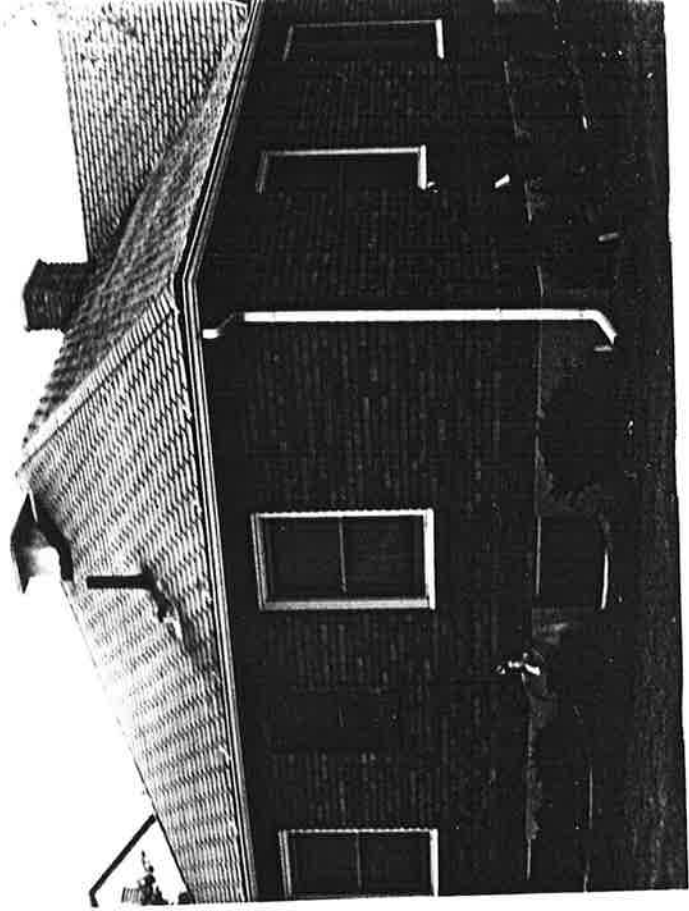
1927 Yale Avenue. Period Revival English Tudor: 1937.
(Home faces south)



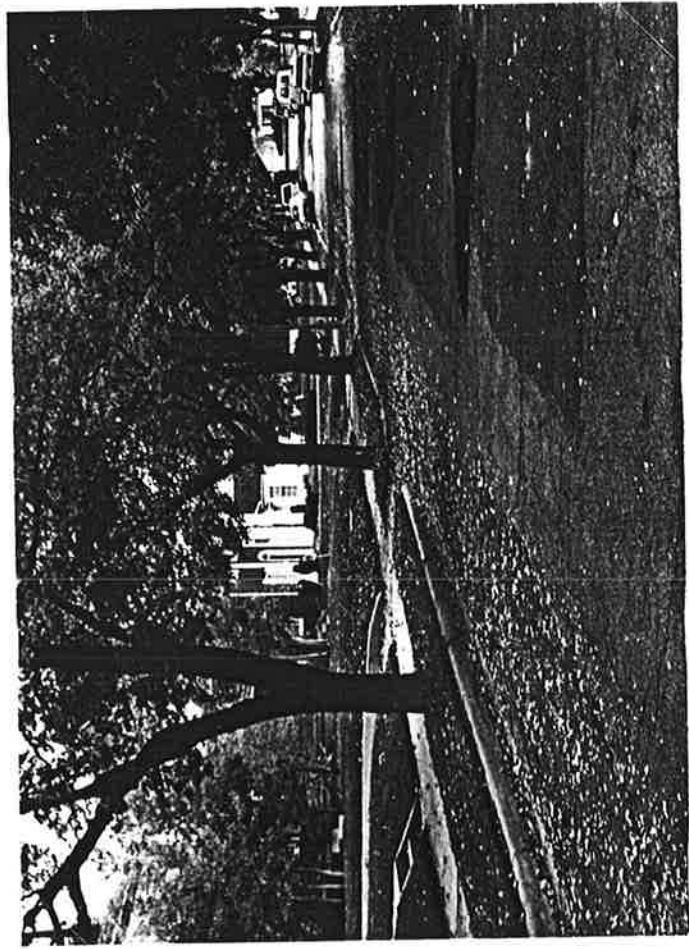
Front Elevation



Front elevation masonry detail, south-east corner



Rear Elevation



Yale Heights Subdivision, Block 1. Looking east.



1919 Yale Avenue, Block A. Period Revival Cottage - English Tudor (addition added at back - the part with a aluminum siding)



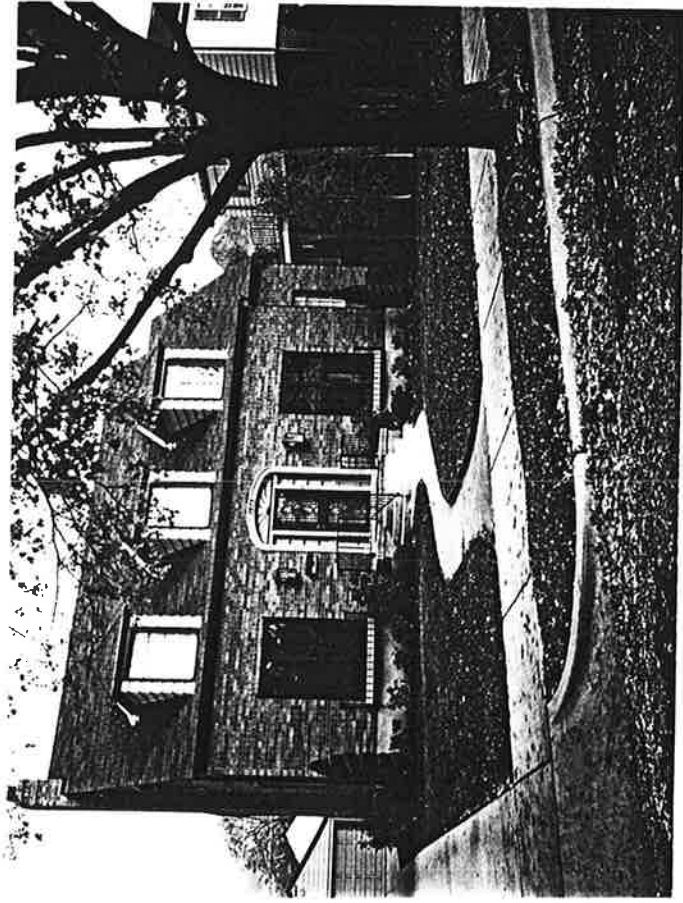
1927 Yale Avenue, also English Tudor. These two homes were nearly identical in plan.



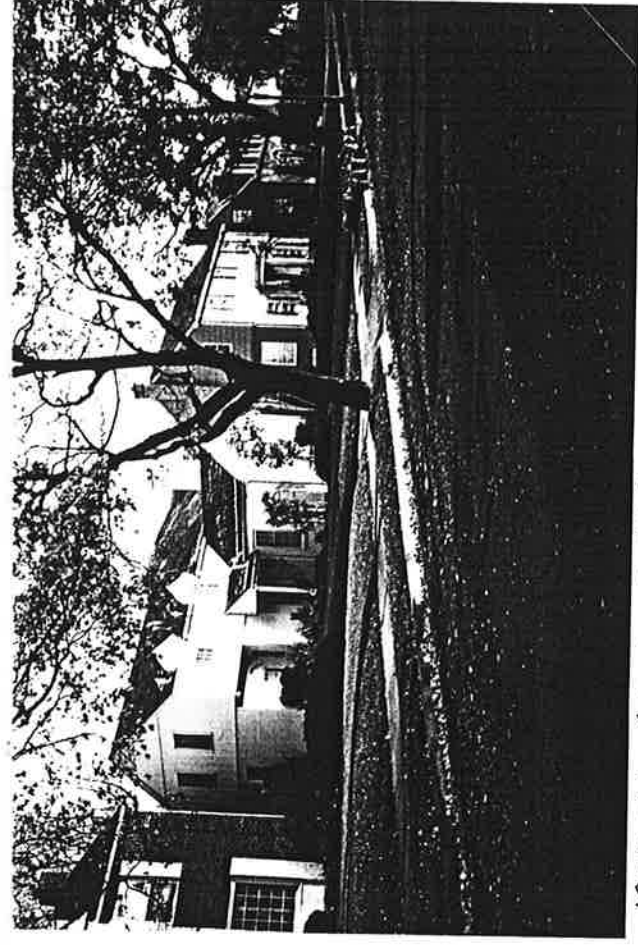
1935 Yale Avenue, looking east up the street. Period Revival Cottage - Colonial Revival with gambrel roof.



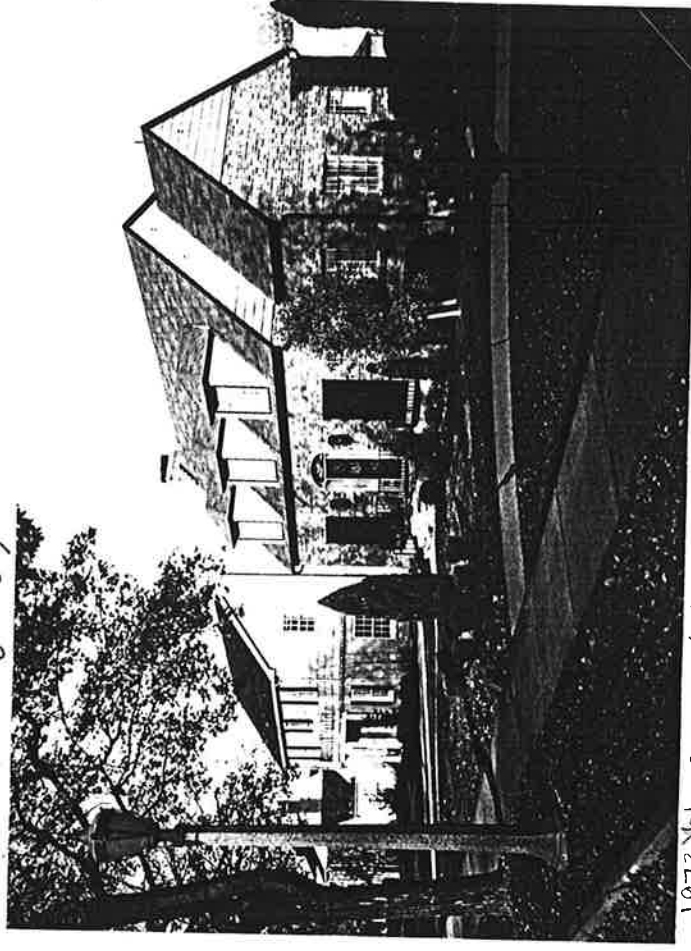
949 Yale Avenue: Built in 1940. Colonial Revival.
(Block A, looking west)



173 Yale Avenue, front elevation: built 1938.
Colonial Revival. This home belongs to Hilda Hanson, an original
resident interviewed in this project. The living room is on the left; dining room, right; kitchen, back; breakfast nook, extension to right. 3 bedrooms
upstairs.



1957 Yale Avenue: Built in 1939. English Tudor with
half-timbering on the second story which has been painted white.
(Block A, looking east)



1973 Yale Avenue, looking west at 1965 Yale: 1938, Colonial Revival



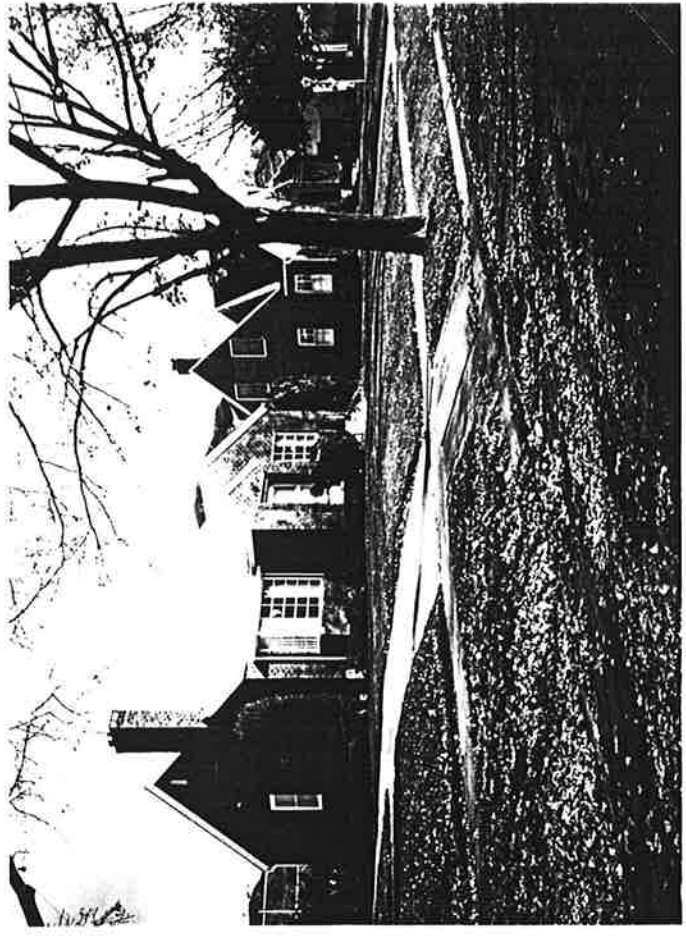
Bonneville Elementary School, built in the center of the Yale Heights subdivision in 1949. (faces west)



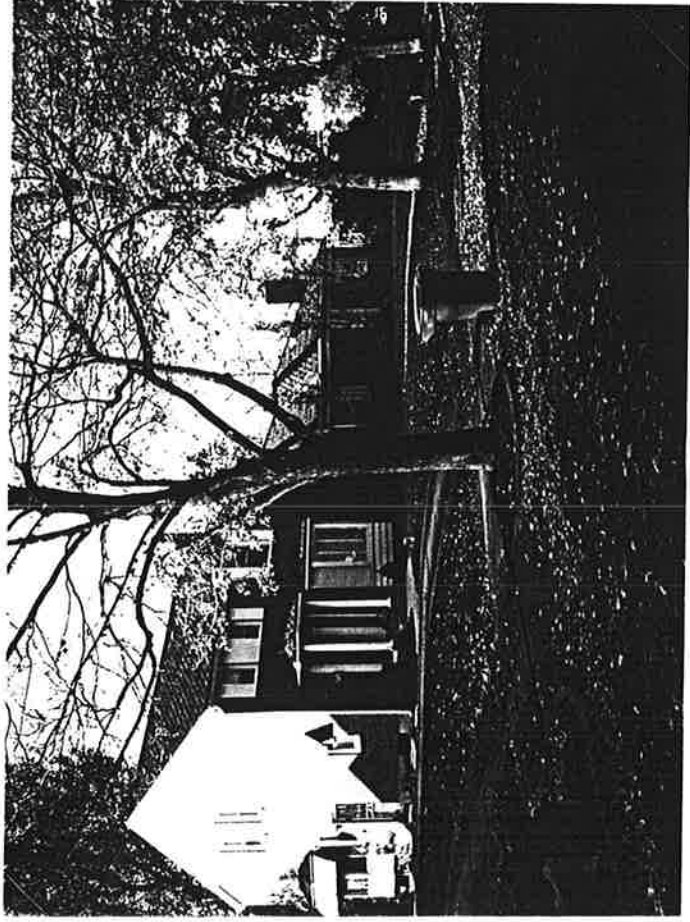
Rear elevation and playing field. (faces east)



Block B, Yale Heights subdivision, looking east. Homes built mostly in the 1940s, a few years after blocks A & B. Some homes (i.e. on the left) have undergone extensive remodeling.



Block B, looking east.



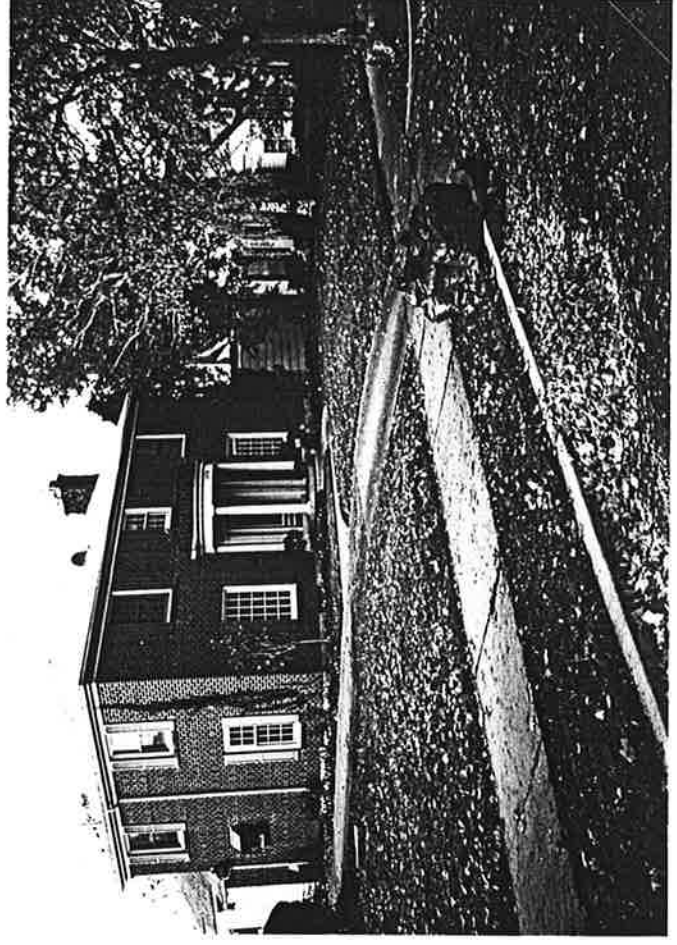
Block B, Yale Heights: 1920 Yale Avenue, looking west.
built in 1939, some elements of Colonial Revival.



1936 Yale Avenue: built in 1939 (some elements of English Tudor).



1958 Yale Avenue: built in 1940. Cape Cod, Colonial Revival.



1970 Yale Avenue: built in 1940. Colonial Revival